



In this season of Christmas, may our lives proclaim "Joy to the world! The Lord has come!"

Let the joy of "THE LORD HAS COME!" shine from you. But how, when troubles make the world seem dark?

It's only possible when we keep our eyes on Jesus. Don't focus on what destroys your joy, for nothing can destroy the coming of the Lord. The absence of joy is merely a blank area in your view of what God is doing.

Look at the love that Jesus has for you! Jesus was born not only to save you from the darkness of sin; He was born because He loves you – He loves YOU! Even if you had never sinned, he would have come into the world so that he could love YOU on your level, human-to-human.

Giving birth to love

Sometimes, great things come in surprising packages that do not seem to be great at all. The Eucharist – in the form of a little wafer of bread – does not look like it contains the full presence of Jesus with all of His humanity and His divinity. The baby Jesus – a tiny, helpless child – does not look like the conqueror of evil. But He is! And so is Jesus in the Eucharist; He is here for you.

And you! You might not seem to be a great person, but you contain Jesus. You contain greatness beyond imagining! This greatness does not dwell only *in* you; it comes out *from* you in the form of love.

We can know for sure that we have Jesus within us because of the love that we give to others. We know for sure that we can be victorious over evil when Christ's love extends outward to others from within us. It is Christ's love in the world – through us – that defeats the darkness of hardships and troubles.

Jesus comes to us, not to be served, but to serve our needs. He even laid down his life for you!

To be a follower of Jesus means we learn to imitate him. Christians are not here to be served by those who treat us poorly. We are here to serve *them*, and in this goodness evil is defeated. In this goodness, the greatness of Jesus extends outward from within us.

Each time we give love to others, whether they deserve it or not, we are giving them the gift of Jesus. We are like Mary, giving birth to love Himself, making every day a Christmas day.

And when the giving gets tiring, we need to return to the Eucharist to be nourished and healed and restored by Jesus Himself. For His love is our Christmas gift from God.

PREVIEW



**HAVE A VERY BLESSED
CHRISTMAS ALL YEAR!**

Your church info or
Pastor's Blessing
goes here.

This box is
customizable!

Home Prayer for the Christmas Season

Zechariah's canticle in Luke 1:68-79 is a great prayer for the celebration of Christmas. It can be adapted into your own words to celebrate the blessings of Christ in your own life.

The following Canticle prayer can be used in private meditation or with family members. Assign a leader to read the scripture lines (in italics); others read the response (R) and fill in the blanks.

OUR CHRISTMAS PRAYER CANTICLE

Blessed be the Lord the God of Israel, because he has visited his people and freed them from sin!

(R) He has visited me in _____ [name a recent joyful or difficult situation] and I am grateful that he has given us freedom and victory.

He has raised up for us a Savior who is mighty in strength from the lineage of his servant David.

(R) He has revealed his power to us, and our household will serve him; I dedicate this family to the Christ child and ask him to bless us with unity and _____.

As he promised through his holy ones, the prophets of ancient times, he will save us from our enemies and from the hands of all our foes.

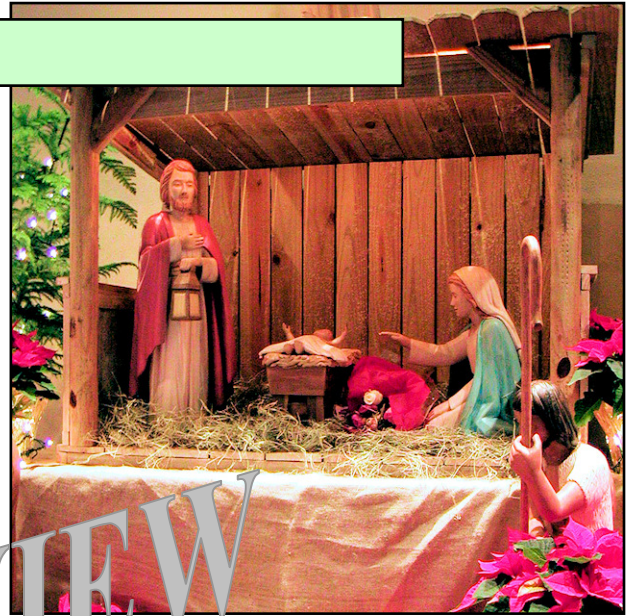
(R) He has shown his loving power in my difficulties, and I thank him, with grateful a heart, especially for _____.

He has dealt mercifully with the fathers of our faith, remembering the holy covenant he made, the oath that he swore to Abraham, to rid us of fear and deliver us from the enemy, so that we could worship him devoutly, and through all our days, be holy in his sight.

(R) He has shown his love for the world by becoming one of us, born on that first Christmas in the humility of a child to bring us the Good News of holy living, and to die for us, delivering us from the power of our sins, and delivering us from _____.

Rid of fear and delivered from the enemy, we can serve him devoutly and be holy in his sight.

(R) In him, we having nothing to fear; in him, we will live forever in heaven, with peace, with joy, and love; and I choose to serve him here on earth, especially in the service/ministry of _____.



And you, my child, shall be a prophet of the Most High God, going before me to prepare straight paths for me, giving people knowledge of salvation to provide freedom from their sins.

(R) O Lord, make me your prophet. I dedicate my life to you – my days and my hours, to prepare the way before you in the hearts of those I serve in my home, in my parish, in my community, and in the world around me.

All this is the work of the tender compassion of our God, who is like the dawn that breaks into darkness to shine on those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, and to guide our feet into the way of peace.

(R) Let us now all offer to God those we know who are in darkness, who are facing death, and who are living in turmoil, division, or war: _____.

All this is the work of the tender compassion of our God, who is like the dawn that breaks into darkness to shine on those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, and to guide our feet into the way of peace.

(R) Yes Lord! Let it be as you say!
Amen!